



A Brief Summary of Virginia's DRAFT Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for FFY 2016 – FFY 2018

October 1, 2015

Introduction

Access to stable, high quality child care and early learning experiences improves the odds of success for parents and children who rely on child care. The federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) provides resources to States to enable low-income parents to work or pursue education and training so that they may better support their families while at the same time promoting the learning and development of their children. The CCDF also provides funding to enhance the quality of child care for all children.

On November 19, 2014, the President signed the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 into law. The Act reauthorizes and significantly revises the CCDF program and the requirements placed on states to receive these funds. For example, the Act requires health and safety standards and training for child care providers, national fingerprint background checks for child care providers, on-site monitoring by qualified inspectors, 12-month eligibility redetermination periods for the Child Care Subsidy Program, consumer information, and other components that, when fully implemented, will strengthen child care in this country and support child and family success. Some of the changes apply to child care providers participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program, while others relate to all child care providers. Some of the changes are straightforward, while others are more complex and will be phased in over several years.

The federal government requires states to explain how they will use their CCDF dollars in a state child care plan, and they also provide states with a very detailed outline of the information to be included in the plan. States are required to submit their plans to the Federal government by March 1, 2016. This three-year plan covers Federal Fiscal Year 2016 through Federal Fiscal Year 2018.

Virginia's Draft CCDF Plan

Here is a summary of the eight main sections contained in Virginia's draft plan and a very brief description of the contents of each section. Please note that the summary does not address every element of the Plan or the Act.

Section 1 - Define CCDF Leadership & Coordination with Relevant Systems

This section explains how stakeholders participated in the development of the Plan, where authority lies to make policy decisions and program changes, and who is responsible for implementing the action blueprint.

- The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is the Lead Agency responsible for Virginia's CCDF Plan and its implementation. VDSS has partnerships with a number of relevant systems to leverage existing systems and services and to increase the supply and quality of child care.

- The CCDBG Act of 2014 requires a statewide Child Care Disaster Preparedness Plan. VDSS has formed a workgroup of stakeholders to complete this activity by September 2016.

Section 2 - Promote Family Engagement through Outreach & Consumer Education

This section describes how child care-related information is provided to parents and requires a user-friendly and comprehensive Consumer Education website and reporting of serious injuries and deaths.

- The Act requires states to have a comprehensive child care consumer education website. Virginia is developing a new site that will make it easy for parents, child care providers, and the general public to find and understand information about: financial services outside of child care; licensing, inspections, background checks, and barrier crimes; monitoring results for unlicensed subsidy vendors; child care quality; social-emotional development of young children; and information on substantiated child abuse, serious injuries, and deaths of children in child care.
- Virginia's CommonHelp portal provides citizens with centralized information and the ability to apply for comprehensive benefits and services at one time.
- Virginia is considering the development of a social emotional behavioral health policy, which may also address expulsion of children ages 0 – 5.

Section 3 - Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families

This section provides information on the state's current eligibility policies for Child Care Subsidy and actions needed to comply with the Act.

- Virginia will make a number of required regulation, guidance and systems changes to comply with Act requirements, including: graduated phaseout of care, which in Virginia means setting an exit income eligibility limit higher than the entrance limit for families; amending the rules associated with 12-month redetermination to allow for income increases up to 85% of State Median Income without loss of eligibility; allowing a 3-month job search period for families experiencing a non-temporary job loss or cessation of approved training or education; and developing an outreach plan for, and expediting the enrollment of children who, are homeless.
- Virginia already takes into account irregular fluctuations in earnings by allowing for income averaging in specific instances and has a provision to allow families to participate in redetermination interviews via telephone to prevent undue disruption of work. This provision was optional and will now become mandatory.

Section 4 - Ensure Equal Access to High Quality Child Care for Low-Income Children

This section provides information on the state's practices to ensure that low-income and vulnerable children can access high-quality care.

- The Commonwealth's practices to ensure that low-income and vulnerable children can access high-quality care generally meet the new Act requirements.
- The Department has formed a workgroup to identify areas of need within the Commonwealth and make recommendations on strategies to increase the supply and quality of care to meet the needs of: underserved areas, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children receiving care during non-traditional hours. This group will also consider the child care needs of military families.

Section 5 - Establish Standards & Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health & Safety of Care Settings

This section describes how Virginia will establish or amend standards and monitoring processes to meet health and safety requirements, and also requires explanations for exemptions to licensing standards.

- Establish group size and 10 health and safety requirement areas for all currently licensed, registered and regulated child care programs and unlicensed CCDF providers.
- Orientation and ongoing child care provider training covering 10 health and safety areas.
- Conduct on-site monitoring of licensed, regulated, registered and CCDF child care providers.
- Formal written qualifications and consistent training for licensing inspectors.
- System upgrades for shared information.
- Complete a national fingerprint background check for staff in child care programs.

Section 6 - Recruit & Retain a Qualified & Effective Child Care Workforce

This section describes actions to develop a competent, skilled and stable child care workforce.

- Virginia is enhancing current professional development options for child care providers to cover: 10 required health and safety topics listed in the Act, in addition to CPR and First Aid; how to work with families who may be experiencing homelessness; business management; emergency preparedness; and social-emotional development of children.
- Virginia will also implement a professional development registry, trainer and training approval processes in conjunction with the Career Pathways, and competencies for providers, trainers and technical assistance professionals.

Section 7 - Support Continuous Quality Improvement

This section describes actions to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for accessing high quality child care.

- Virginia has a statewide quality rating and improvement system, Virginia Quality, which meets the requirements of the Act, and will proceed with implementing a revised quality framework that is already underway.
- Virginia will expand its strategies for providing infant and toddler care to ensure that 3% of funds are expended annually in this area by FFY 2017.

Section 8 - Ensure Grantee Accountability

This section describes accountability measures to ensure program integrity and to identify fraud or other program violations.

- Existing policies regarding fraud are consistent with Act requirements.
- Policies will be established to collect improper payments caused by administrative error.

Information for this summary was extracted by Virginia Department of Social Services staff from Virginia's Draft Child Care and Development Fund Plan, 10/1/2015, (<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/ece>) and the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/ccdf-reauthorization>).

